

of Communist atrocities, for the remainder of the day the South Korean Marines ruthlessly sought out the North Koreans and other "subversives."

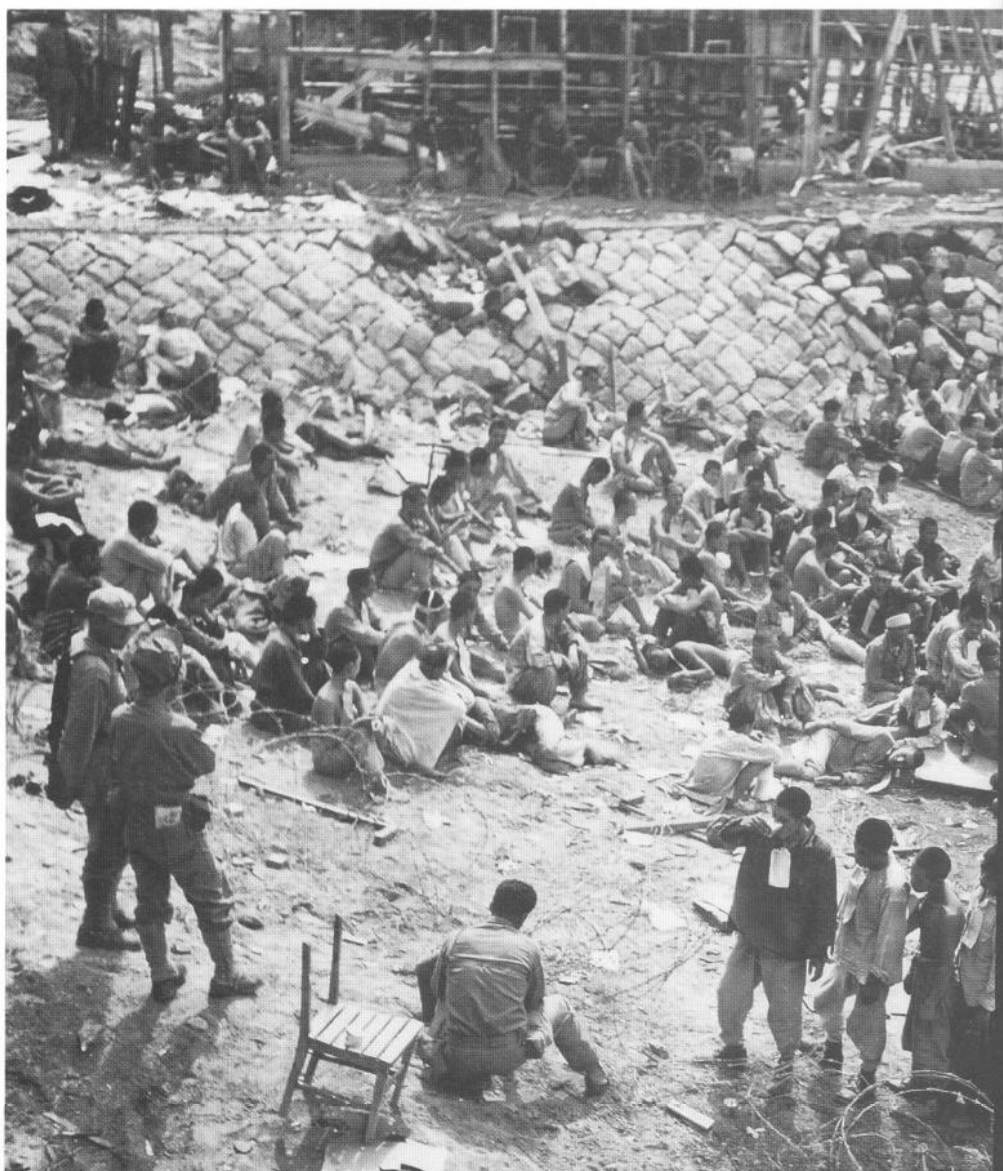
As UN forces secured **Inchon** and strengthened the beachhead on the 16th, the UN command took other steps to engage the North Korean army. General Walker's Eighth Army attacked out of the Pusan Perimeter, working to prevent the early withdrawal of NKPA units from the southern front. Then, the U.S. Army and ROKN mounted an operation to cut the north-south road at Changsa-Dong on the peninsula's east coast. A Korean LST attempted to land a guerrilla force, but the ship grounded and broached just offshore. The irregulars finally made it to the beach, only to be attacked by a nearby North Korean garrison. The operation a failure, the battleship *Missouri* and cruiser *Helena* and Air Force F-51 Mustangs hit the enemy with their fire so another LST could extract the guerrillas.

On the 17th, the North Koreans counterattacked the UN beachhead at **Inchon**, so Communist reinforcements might have time to reach Seoul. Early that morning, the North Korean air force made its one and only assault on the amphibious force off **Inchon**. A pair of YAK fighters dove on the warships anchored south of Wolmi Do. Except for a lone sailor on sentry duty at the stern

of the cruiser *Rochester*, who fired his rifle at the planes, the crew of the cruiser was caught off guard. The enemy planes dropped several bombs on the Americans but the only weapon that hit a ship failed to explode. The YAKs then strafed HMS *Jamaica*, mortally wounding one seaman and hitting two others. The Royal Navy took its revenge, splashing one of the attackers with fire from four-inch guns and automatic weapons. The cruiser's skipper, Captain Jocelyn C.

S. Salter, RN, later felt that it was "foolhardy" of the North Koreans "to go for two cruisers when they had a choice of transports and freighters galore."

As that futile attack ended, an NKPA rifle battalion supported by a platoon of T-34s advanced against the lines of the 5th Marines. The North Korean units, which made no reconnaissance of UN positions, moved into a trap. The 5th Marines quickly destroyed the tank column. To the south, Colonel





American Marines inspect a North Korean Ilyushin IL-10 "Shturmovik" (Soviet-built) attack bomber seized when U.S. forces overran Kimpo airfield. Except for one foray against the fleet, the North Korean air force could do little to help the defenders of Inchon. The Allies had clear superiority in the air.

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fire from the 11th Marines and small arms fire decimated the ranks of the enemy infantry forces moving against the air base perimeter.

On the 18th, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, stormed Hill 123. Assistance in this attack came from HMS *Kenya*, which poured 300 six-inch rounds on the enemy. Still unbeaten, NKPA gunners inflicted 30 casualties on the Americans when they shelled the slopes of the hill. Throughout the hour-long barrage, the senior naval medical officer present, Lieutenant Robert J. Fleischaker, MC, moved about the hill to treat the wounded, without regard for his safety. The Navy awarded Fleischaker the Bronze Star for his bravery under fire.

In support of the 5th Marines, the cruisers *Rochester* and *Toledo* and U.S. Navy

Lewis B. Puller's leathernecks had a tougher fight. Elements of the 1st Marine Regiment,

with the help of five Corsairs, fought their way through a heavily fortified defile on the road to Seoul.

Much to the distress of General Smith, MacArthur went ashore that morning and insisted on traveling just behind the front line, at one point directing his jeep driver to a ridge crest to observe a fire fight. Smith was greatly relieved when CINCUNC returned safely to *Mount McKinley*, particularly when he learned that his Marines had flushed seven heavily armed NKPA soldiers from the culvert on which MacArthur's jeep idled as he viewed some burning T-34s.

With the NKPA attack spent, the 5th Marines seized the south end of Kimpo air base and a KMC battalion advanced to cover their left flank. North Korean counterattacks that night failed to dislodge the Americans from Kimpo. Artillery

American and South Korean troops process North Korean prisoners of war on Wolmi Do.

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Skyraiders bombarded Communist forces on both sides of the Han River northwest of Kimpo. Despite these heavy attacks, the naval aviators reported that the enemy units were "still active."

That same day, the Joint Task Force 7 transports began disembarking several Army units. The 7th Infantry Division's 32nd Infantry Regiment landed and advanced to cover the 1st Marine Division's right flank. The 96th Field Artillery Battalion and the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade also came ashore, with the engineers relieving the KMC battalion in Seoul.

On 19 September, the 1st Marine Division continued to advance on Seoul. The 5th Marines, still within supporting distance of the task force cruisers, prepared to cross the Han north of the capital. To the south, the 1st Marines began a three-day battle for the industrial suburb of Yongdungpo.

Critical close air support for this fight would come from VMF-212 and night-fighting squadron VMF(N)-542, which flew into Kimpo from Japan that day. Marine Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, the X Corps tactical air commander, directed these units. FEAF's Combat Cargo Command, with C-54 and Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcars, also began flying ammunition and aviation gas into Kimpo on the 19th. The experienced Air Force cargo handlers of the 1st Combat Support Unit

(Provisional) quickly unloaded and pushed forward the vital material.

The UN advance toward Seoul continued on the 20th and the 21st. After an initial setback, Marine LVTs carrying the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, crossed the Han River and, with the assistance of *Sicily's* VMF-214 fighters, established a lodgement on the far bank. The ground force received a welcome re-

inforcement when the Army's 31st Infantry Regiment, the ROK 17th Infantry Regiment and the 7th Marines came ashore at Inchon. The 6th Fleet's attack transport *Bexar* (APA 237) and attack cargo ship *Montagu* (AKA

(Left to right) Airman William J. Ewsuk, Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Francis L. Diamond and Airman Joseph F. Bellina arm a Vought F4U Corsair of Fighter Squadron 24 on board *Boxer* (CV 21). Success in combat depended on the professional skill and plain hard work of everyone on the Navy team.

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